NOAA REPORT

Vol. VII, No. 5 www.publicaffairs.noaa.gov/nr May 1998

Jarrell Named Hurricane Center Director: Jerry D. Jarrell was named the sixth director of the NWS National Hurricane Center in Miami by Commerce Secretary William M. Daley last month.

"Jerry Jarrell is widely known and respected by national and international emergency managers and forecasters," said Daley. "His depth of experience, dedication and devotion to the communities he serves are essential to furthering our mission of saving lives and property."

Jarrell has been acting director of the Center since September 1997, serving as deputy to then-director Bob Burpee.

News Briefs

He joined the Hurricane Center as deputy director under Bob Sheets in 1988.

He has been active in forecasting tropical weather since serving with the U.S. Navy 1957 to 1977.

A Warmer and Wetter World?: A special summary on the nation's unusual winter weather and climate extremes shows that "this record-breaking El Niño is consistent with a worldwide trend over the last 40 years toward a warmer and wetter world," according to NOAA Administrator D. James Baker.

The report provides highlights on the country's unique weather during the height of the El Niño, from December 1997 through March 1998.

This winter's El Niño, in a sense, provides us a window on the future," said

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Daley assists NOAA researcher in water quality testing.

Daley Calls Earth Day at Keys Sanctuary 'Best Day I've Had' as Secretary

Commerce Secretary William Daley used Earth Day as an opportunity to teach students in the Florida Keys about the importance of oceans and how we can affect them.

Daley spent the afternoon with eight students participating in the Florida

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Nationwide by Mid-2000

AWIPS Deployment OK'd

Commerce Secretary William M. Daley has approved the National Weather Service's plan for a full production and installation of the AWIPS system, an interactive weather computer and communications system that will help provide better weather- and flood-related services to protect life and property.

The decision authorizes production of 95 additional systems necessary to improve the data flow and forecast and warning services of the National Weather Service. In total, 152 Advanced Weather Interactive Processing Systems (AWIPS) will be installed nationwide by the end of FY 1999.

"This decision is a significant

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Mark Trail Looks at Tsunamis, Turtles

Comic Strip Features NOAA Themes

The March 29, 1998, issue of the *Mark Trail* comic strip illustrates the threat of tsunamis to U.S. coastlines and provides safety information.

Drawn by Jack H. Elrod, Jr., Mark Trail is syndicated by King Features and carried in 175 newspapers across the country. Elrod has featured NOAA themes many times in his stories which always focus on nature and the outdoors. Past issues covered NOAA Weather Radio, marine sanctuaries, El Niño, and fisheries. A recent series had Trail, an environmental news reporter, interviewing NMFS director Rolland Schmitten about endangered sea turtles.

Mark Trail artist Jack Elrod Jr. has recently used tsunamis as a focus of his strip (above) and featured NMFS director Rolland Schmitten in a series about sea turtles (right).

Recently a framed copy of the *Mark Trail* tsunami issue, personally autographed by Elrod, was presented to Dr. Eddie Bernard, Director, NOAA Pacific Environment Laboratory (PMEL), and Richard Hagemeyer, Director, National Weather Service (NWS) Pacific Region, at the spring meeting of the National Tsunami Hazard Mitigation Program Steering Group which Bernard chairs. Hagemeyer, who oversees the operations of the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center, is one of the NOAA members along with Richard Hutcheon, Director of the NWS Alaska Region and supervisor of the West Coast/Alaska Tsunami Warning Center, and Frank Gonzales, NOAA/PMEL.

The Tsunami Steering Group is composed of representatives from NOAA, FEMA, USGS, and the states of Hawaii, Alaska, Washington, Oregon, California—states that run the most risk of tsunamis to their coastal communities. The federal/state partnership has developed a multi-year tsunami mitigation plan which includes development of inundation and evacuation maps, upgrading of seismic equipment, deployment of a network of deep ocean tsunami detection buoys, and a public awareness program.

Kids Find Out What Their Parents *Really* Do

Kids had a chance to get the scoop on what their parents really do during the day on Commerce's "Take Your Children to Work Day," which blended time with parents with special activities. Six presentations on science and technology careers were given in the Commerce lobby, followed by a visit from Secretary Daley. Representing NOAA were NOAA Corps officers Lt. Cmdr. Sue McKay (center in photo) and Cmdr. Sam DeBow (right), former ship commanding officers, and Lt. Brian Taggart, a "hurricane hunter" pilot; and meteorologist Margaret McCalla.

Lt. Cmdr. Sue McKay (center) and Cmdr. Sam DeBow (right) represented NOAA at "Take Our Children to Work" Day in Washington.

At NWS in Silver Spring, kids learned about severe weather predictions and forecasts, and about careers for women in weather from a panel including Renee Fair, Chris Alex, Lesley Julian, Barbara Tobe and Kay Weston.

Earth Day in Keys for Daley, Baker

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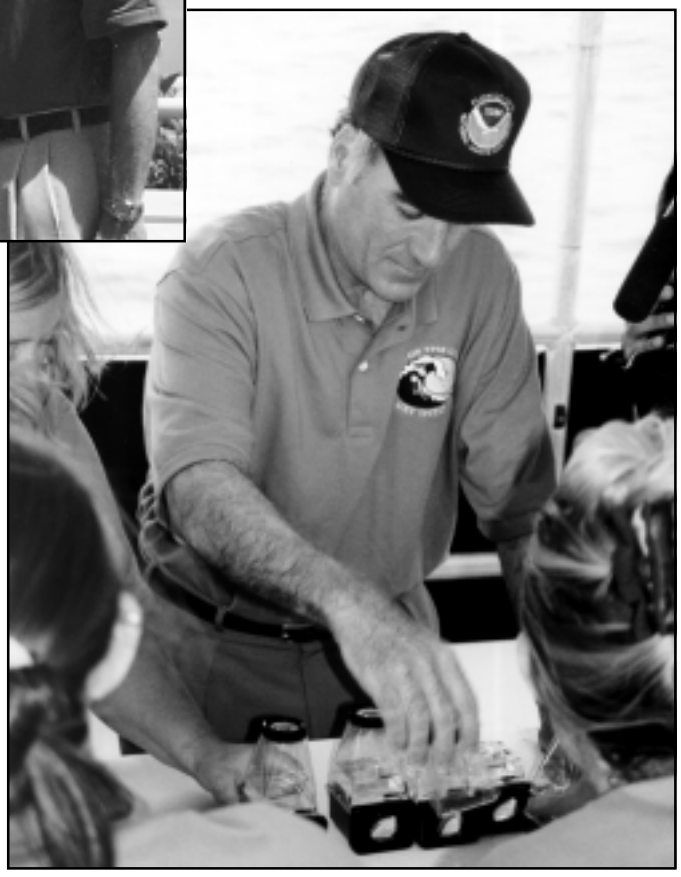
Keys National Marine Sanctuary's Coral Reef Classroom program. The students took part in water sampling, observations of water quality and examining plankton samples.

"Today is Earth Day and this is the Year of the Ocean, I think this is the most fitting way to celebrate both," said Daley. "It is crucial that we instill in these students the understanding that we can make a difference for the future of this coral reef and the marine environment."

Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary Superintendent Billy Causey (left) and Dr. Baker (right), give Daley and students their bearings while at sea during Coral Reef Classroom.

(Above) Following the Coral Reef Classroom, Daley, Keys Sanctuary superintendant Billy Casey and Dr. Baker (first, third and fourth from left) presented four Florida residents with Environmental Hero Awards for their dedication to the marine environment. Here, they present an award to Chuck Hayes, a retired U.S. Air Force B-52 pilot, who has become an authority on shipwreck sites and special natural resource sites. Hayes assists the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary personnel on daily diving activities and also informs the scientists of unique natural features as well as damage to sanctuary resources.



(Right) Secretary Daley shows students how to examine plankton samples during Coral Reef Classroom program.Daley later said, "I've been in office 14 months, and this is the best day I've had as Secretary."

Focus On...

Jason Project in Monterey Bay

The Nation's largest marine sanctuary and smallest uniformed service joined forces with The Jason Project, brainchild of noted oceanographer Dr. Robert Ballard, to bring ocean science to millions of students across the globe through a virtual field trip down the information superhighway.

The latest Jason Project expedition, "Jason IX: Oceans of Earth and Beyond," is one of many Jason Project efforts designed to excite and engage students in science and technology and to motivate and provide professional development for teachers. Jason IX took place from March 16 through March 27.

The project brought together at the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary a contingent of scientists, students, sailors, educators, constituents, politicians, corporate CEOs, government officials and media as the expedition got underway. Some were there to participate, some just to watch as three concurrent broadcast linkages each day enabled a diver in the Monterey Bay canyon to speak with a diver at the project's sister site in Bermuda as they studied the varied effects of El Niño on the Pacific and Atlantic oceans. The divers were also able to answer questions from students calling in from Jason "primary interactive network" (PIN) sites throughout the United States.

Intermittently, scientists and Jason student "argonauts" from such sites as the Monterey Bay Aquarium, the NOAA ship *McArthur*, and Bermuda entered into these discussions and others in exciting, real-time dialogue. The project linked together individuals across a continent in a voyage of scientific exploration and learning. Students everywhere, through PIN sites or Internet, followed along.

Scientist and argonaut examine photoplankton smaples in the specimen container as a Jason Project cameraman zooms in.

Student argonauts began their two-week field expedition with Dr. Ballard at the Monterey Bay Aquarium Discovery Center, where they performed experiments on the water quality of the area with the help of scientists, studying in particular the sedimentation effects of the run-off and frequent mud slides resulting from El Niño.

The NOAA ship *McArthur*, commanded by Lt. Cmdr. Bill Sites of the NOAA Corps, sailed into the sanctuary on March 22 to serve as a seagoing platform throughout the remainder of the expedition. Dr. Sylvia Earle, former NOAA chief scientist and current National Geographic explorer-in-residence, joined the ship and Jason argonauts as host researcher. Together they conducted survey operations to examine the distribution of zooplankton in Monterey Bay and relate their findings to changes in the physical environment. Working aboard the McArthur gave the argonauts a chance to observe scientists firsthand in a marine environment.

The Jason Project is consideredthe world's leading interactive, high-technology educational outreach program, founded by explorer Dr. Robert Ballard, who discovered the wreck of the Titanic long before the popular movie. In conjunction with the International Year of the Ocean, this year's project focused upon the impact of human and atmospheric activities on the oceans.

NOAA provided significant resources to the project, which was a combined partnership between NOAA, the Jason Foundation for Education and EDS Corporation—representing the best of the government, non-profit and corporate worlds. By working with the Jason Foundation, NOAA was able to further its mission of raising public awareness of ocean issues during this Year of the Ocean and to profile NOAA programs and the role of the NOAA Corps in providing the nation's front line of ocean and atmospheric research.

Both Ballard and Dr. Sylvia Earle were extremely appreciative of NOAA's support, and thanked NOAA and the *McArthur* a number of times during the live broadcasts—including a thank you from Ballard during a prime time newscast in Washington, D.C. on March 26.

The Jason Project was considered an overwhelming success by all involved. A major portion of that credit goes to the NOAA Corps and wage marine crew of the McArthur, which substantially raised NOAA's visibility in the Jason Project.

To view the Jason Project broadcasts, visit the Jason website at http://www.jason.org/front.html and click on archived Jason broadcasts.

VIP RECEPTIONS

A special reception for NOAA constituents was held on March 20. About a hundred individuals viewed the broadcasts, toured the Jason broadcast locations at the Monterey Aquarium, and gathered for a luncheon and discussion on the Jason program as an example of a living partnership between government, private, and corporate interests. Congressman Sam Farr (D-CA) spoke warmly of the Jason experi-

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Using salt water and a hose, scientist and argonaut rinse the photoplankton caught in the 20-foot bongo net into the specimin container at the end of the tapered net,

F5 Twister Caused Widespread Damage

Disaster Team Sent to Study NWS Ala. Tornado Response

Beginning in the late afternoon of April 8, 1998, severe thunderstorms produced tornadoes causing massive property damage and loss of lives across eastern Mississippi, central Alabama, and the western part of Georgia.

The storms, which left 41 dead and caused property damage in the millions, produced tornadoes that tracked for more than 30 miles. The most intense damage occurred in Jefferson County, Alabama as an F5 tornado—one of the worst in state history—destroyed more than 1,100 homes and damaged almost 1,000 more.

Thirty one people were killed in Jefferson and another two died as the storm passed into St. Clair County. Ground survey teams reported that the storm finally lost intensity well into Gwinnett County, Georgia.

The National Weather Service Storm Prediction Center in Norman, Oklahoma had indicated a moderate risk for severe thunderstorms in the affected areas early that day and upgraded to a high risk with tornado warnings later on. Weather service offices in Memphis, Tennessee, Birmingham, Alabama, and Atlanta, Georgia closely monitored the developing storm and issued numerous tornado watches and warnings.

The storm's tornadoes–some of which reached F5, the highest possible–destroyed homes, businesses, schools across its path.

Two hundred mile-per-hour winds caused damage like this to homes in the storm's path.

County emergency managers interviewed by the National Weather Service Disaster Survey Team said the local offices made them well aware of the tornado potential and were in a state of high alert as the storm approached.

Timely and accurate weather service warnings, widely disseminated by the emergency management community and the media, some of which preempted regular programming for "wall-to-wall" storm coverage, were credited with saving numerous lives. In addition, prior outreach and coordination efforts by NWS field office staff were cited as important factors in helping residents and officials develop tornado response plans and react appropriately as the tornadoes approached.

The widespread catastrophic damage caused by winds in excess of 200 miles per hour also prompted visits from President Bill Clinton and Vice President Al Gore.

–Bob Chartuk

Sec. Daley Approves Full AWIPS Deployment

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milestone in our commitment to the American people to finish the modernization and restructuring of the National Weather Service," said Secretary Daley. "When AWIPS is installed in Weather Forecast Offices all over the United States, our forecasters can take full advantage of the many modern technologies we've added over the past several years and serve the public more effectively and efficiently."

"Completing the National Weather Service modernization is the top priority with NOAA," said D. James Baker, NOAA Administrator.

"AWIPS lets our forecasters display weather data in a variety of ways, quickly analyze evolving weather systems, and issue timely forecasts and warnings for the protection of life and property."

The AWIPS system will replace the National Weather Service's existing 1970s-era weather communications system known as Automation of Field Operations and Services, also known as AFOS. AWIPS will allow forecasters to display and analyze satellite imagery, radar data, automated weather observations and computer-generated numerical forecasts, all in one workstation.

"The feedback I get from our offices that already have AWIPS is that it's an outstanding tool," said Jack Kelly, NWS director. "Before AWIPS, our forecasters relied on three or more systems to view the information needed to produce forecasts and warnings. With AWIPS, our forecasters can quickly see and use weather data from a variety of systems, all at one workstation."

—Barry Reichenbaugh

(More information about AWIPS, including images of what forecasters see on AWIPS display screens is available on the Internet at http://tgsv5.nws.noaa.gov/msm/awips/awipsmsm.htm.)

Jason Project Teams With Monterey Bay Sanctuary, Corps

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ence, and urged increased federal support of marine science. The reception was a great success – informative, enjoyable, and greatly appreciated by those attending.

On March 25 the *McArthur* hosted a VIP reception that received numerous compliments and rave reviews, right down to the dolphin ice carving prepared by the steward department. Tours were also provided. Guests included John Fahey, president of the National Geographic Society, and his family; renowned marine artist Wyland; and corporate CEOs from the Jason Foundation.

A CHALLENGING EXPERIENCE

"The Jason folks, the camera crew and production team, the communications team, the teachers and argonauts were all wonderful to work with," said Lt. Cmdr. Bill Sites. "It was one of those experiences that everyone knew was very challenging but really came together as a solid team effort. I believe everyone was very proud and happy to be involved. We had fun, although it was stressful and tiring."

–Jeanne Kouhestani

Crew members bring up a bongo net off the stern of the McArthur. The fine-meshed nets are used to collect photoplankton samples.

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Baker. "We can't draw a causal link between El Niño and global warming," said Baker. "But our modeling tells us that global warming may first manifest itself in changes in weather patterns. In other words, this winter's El Niño is a taste of what we might expect if the earth warms as we now project," he added.

May Launch Planned For NOAA-K: A new satellite that will improve weather forecasting and monitor environmental events around the world is scheduled for launch on May 13. NOAA-K, a joint project of NOAA and NASA, will be launched into a near-polar orbit 516 miles above the Earth on a U.S. Air Force Titan II rocket. It will circle the Earth every 102 minutes, passing over the North and South Poles on each orbit.

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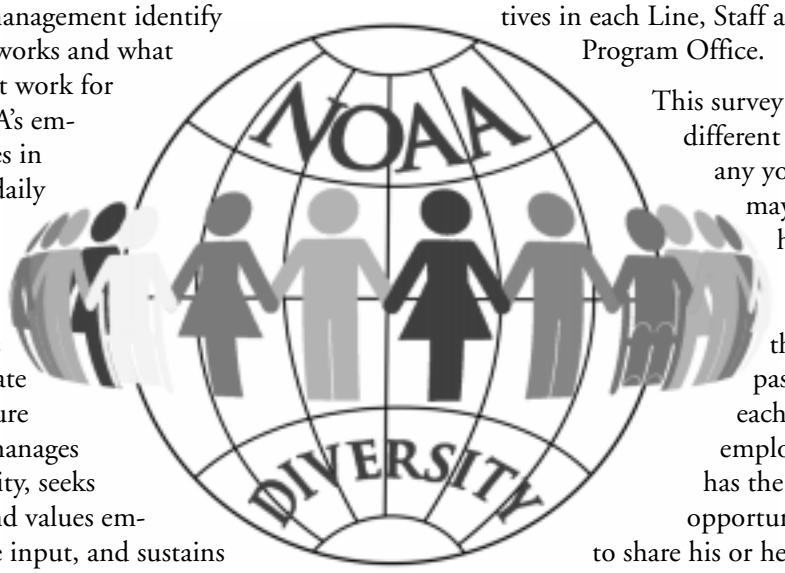
NOAA-K is the first in a series of five satellites with improved imaging and sounding capabilities that will operate over the next 12 years. Like other NOAA satellites, NOAA-K will collect meteorological data and transmit the information to users around the world to enhance weather and climate forecasting. In the United States, the data will be used primarily by NWS for its operational long-range weather and climate forecasts.

Improved Recreational Fishing Survey Seen: NMFS will spend nearly $12 million over the next three years to improve data collection surveys that track the effort and catch of recreational saltwater fishermen throughout the country. The survey will be conducted through telephone interviews of 283,000 households and 56,000 dockside interviews with fishermen for the next year, starting January 1, 1999.

Diversity Office to Begin Survey

NOAA's Office of Diversity is announcing an agency-wide, two-phase organizational assessment that will help employees and management identify what works and what doesn't work for NOAA's employees in their daily office lives.



The goal is to create a culture that manages diversity, seeks out and values employee input, and sustains systems, practices and policies that support continuous feedback and create a high quality of worklife for all.

All-Employee Survey This Summer

Phase 1, to be conducted this summer, is an all-employee survey, followed by feedback and action planning sessions with each workgroup.

Phase 2, occurring in FY 1999, consists of a review of systems, policies and procedures, review of complaints and grievances, and focus group interviews.

Confidentiality Assured

The confidential survey will be administered by a team of trained NOAA employees. Following the survey, the data will be sent to an outside contractor for data analysis and report generation. All employees will receive feedback from the survey. Action planning meetings will be held in each NOAA workgroup to design strategies to correct issues identified in the survey. Information at higher organizational levels will be aggregated and provided to the workgroups for comparison purposes, and detailed office information will be provided to the organizational assessment representatives in each Line, Staff and Program Office.

This survey is different from any you may have taken in the past, as each employee has the opportunity to share his or her thoughts on the organization, and, each employee receives a feedback report. To learn more about the actual survey and how it will be given, see next month's **NOAA Report.**

(*For more information, see NOAA's Office of Diversity home page at http://www.rdc.noaa.gov/diversity.html.)*

NOAA Report is a monthly publication for NOAA employees from the Office of Public Affairs, Washington.
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